



City of Sunnyvale Boards, Commissions and Committees Guidelines for Preparing Minutes

Minutes are the official written records of a legislative body, including appointed Boards and Commissions. It serves as the permanent record of actions taken and direction given to staff. It is not a record of discussions that transpire during a meeting.

Under Administrative Policy Chapter 1, General Management, Article XV, Section 5, each Board shall have minutes of its meetings prepared and placed on the Council agenda in draft form as an information item within two weeks of the Board or Commission meeting. Upon its review and approval by the Board or Commission, if amended, the Board or Commission may direct that the amended minutes be placed on the Council agenda as an information item, with the changes highlighted.

The use of a standardized format is recommended to develop uniformity of minute entries and to save time in composing the record. A glossary or macros may be set up for standardized items or repetitive language, which then requires that you input only specifics.

The City has a template for its Boards and Commissions agendas and minutes and they are available in the City's Intranet on Jasmine. Its format and content have been modeled after the Council's agenda and minutes.

To establish proof that jurisdictional and legal requirements have been met, it is important the minutes contain the following:

- Title of document – “Minutes”; a City logo would be appropriate for identification purposes.
- Name of Board or Commission and type of meeting
- Date, hour, and place of meeting
- Call to order (time meeting started)
- That proper notice has been given if it is a special meeting. A brief statement or phrase indicating the date and time of posting would be sufficient.
- The full names of the Board or Commission members in attendance or absent. If a member arrives late or departs before adjournment, the minutes should reflect the time of arrival and/or departure at that point in the minutes.
- The names of the members who step down due to potential conflict of interest and a brief description of the conflict.
- Name and brief description of announcements made
- Name and brief description of public comments. If the comment includes a support or opposition of an item, it is useful to reflect it in the minutes. If the speaker reads a prepared statement and submits it, the minutes may simply state “XX read a prepared statement (in favor or opposition) and submitted it for the record”.

- A description of each item of business. If staff reports are presented, the name of the staff giving the report and any additional information given orally that is not included in the written report (i.e. any errors noted, additional or new information received).
- Highlights of discussion resulting in action. Discussion that is not germane to the final disposition of an item is not included. Conversely, discussion that is germane to the final disposition of an item is summarized in general terms on a case-by-case basis, such as denying a permit or personnel hearing. Every business item has a final outcome and it is important to report it. Outcomes could be a form of a motion and a vote, a direction to staff, or a consensus. If there is no discussion or action taken on an item that is listed on the agenda, note it received and filed. If there is a reason given, state it.
- "For the record" comments. In instances where a member orally states "for the record" prior, during or after his or her comments, they should be included in verbatim form.
- Opening and closing of public hearing items. Note: If a public hearing is continued to a future meeting, post a notice of the continuance within 24 hours.
- All motions whether passed/carried or failed, and corresponding votes. Motions should include the motion made, the names of the motion maker and the second and the votes in favor, against, abstain or absent. Another way is to state the motion carried/passed with Members XX dissenting, abstaining or absent.
- Any consensus and/or direction given to staff
- Adjournment time. A motion is not necessary to adjourn the meeting. The presiding officer may declare the adjournment. If a meeting was adjourned to another time prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting, it should be indicated in the minutes.
- Name and signature of person approving or preparing the minutes

Minutes should not contain:

- Personal opinions
- Interpretations
- Descriptive or judgmental phrases
- Adverse criticism of members (Board/Commission, staff or others)
- No second or third party statements (he said, she said, they said). There is no object in reporting on the debate; what is important is to record what was "done" by the Board or Commission, not what is said by individual members. An exception to this would be "for the record" comments.

Other tips:

- No matter how informal the meeting is, or how well individuals know each other, the minutes should always refer to individuals by title and name.
- Always identify acronyms

- The tone should be impersonal and objective. Language should be professional. (See some examples listed at the end of this document.)
- Minutes should be prepared and finalized as soon as possible after the meeting. Action agendas are encouraged but not required. They are useful particularly in communicating the outcome of the meeting to appropriate staff well in advance.
- If the meeting is tape-recorded, the tape can be used to facilitate the preparation of the minutes. Tapes are not the official permanent records but they are a public record and subject to reproduction if requested.

Corrections and/or changes to the minutes should be approved by majority of the members. The Chair or member can direct the correction to be made but the correction should be provided in written form to the Board or Commission for approval. If there is disagreement on a proposed correction, the presiding officer may take a formal majority vote to decide whether the correction or change should be made. Once the minutes are approved, any subsequent amendment requires a two-thirds vote for approval. This is necessary for the protection of the record; otherwise there is risk of the record being tampered with.

Keep in mind that minutes are the history of the City and the facts contained in minutes are also treated as evidence in a court of law. Minutes should make appropriate reference to any written evidence in the form of statements, affidavits, reports, photographs, maps, correspondence, or other items filed at the meeting and included as part of the record.

Here are some favorite examples that have been collected through the years for training purposes, of restating statements/comments into professional language:

Said: "I don't know why we just can't give them more money, this is ridiculous."

Restated: *Member XX suggested that more funding be allocated.*

Said: "I don't like it at all, and the Board shouldn't okay it."

Restated: *Member XX opposed the project.*

Said: "This is not the way it should be done. I think we are going about it all wrong, and we are going to be sorry."

Restated: *Member XX disagreed with the recommended course of action.*

Said: "Before we spend this kind of money, let's look into doing something else before we get in over our heads."

Restated: *Member XX suggested that the Board considers other options before approving the expenditure.*



AGENDA

SUNNYVALE (NAME OF BOARD OR COMMISSION HERE)

DATE OF MEETING

TIME/PLACE OF MEETING

CALL TO ORDER/SALUTE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

SCHEDULED PRESENTATION

This category is for any form of presentation from the public approved by staff in advance of the meeting. If there are no items falling under this category, simply indicate "None" next to the heading/category.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Speakers are limited to 3 minutes for announcements of related Board/Commission events, programs, resignations, recognitions, acknowledgments)

CONSENT CALENDAR

- 1.A) Approval of Draft Minutes
- 1.B) Approval of Agenda
- 1.C) Approval of Work Plans, Annual Calendars, etc.
- 1.D) Other items, if any

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

This category is limited to 15 minutes, with a maximum of three minutes per speaker. If you wish to address the Board or Commission, please complete a speaker's card and give it to the Recording Secretary or you may orally make a request to speak. If your subject is not on the agenda, you will be recognized at this time; but the Brown Act (Open Meeting Law) does not allow action by Board or Commission Members. If you wish to speak to a subject listed on the agenda, you will be recognized at the time the item is being considered by the Board or Commission.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

2. Controversial/noticed items (If there's more than one item sub category, group and number them sequentially)
3. New business items (if there's more than one item for this sub category, group and number them sequentially)
4. Old business items (if there's more than one for this sub category, group and number them sequentially)

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

- **BOARDMEMBERS OR COMMISSIONERS ORAL COMMENTS** (Examples would include):
 - Public communications received that the member wants to comment on
 - Staff communications received that the member wants to comment on
 - Other comments, announcements
- **STAFF ORAL COMMENTS** (This would apply to Director's comments as well as other staff. This is for information being provided by staff orally and is separate from the Information Only Items category, which is in written form. The items below are being provided as examples only, they will not appear on the agenda)

Report on City Council Meetings (*This oral reporting is only if this information is not reflected anywhere else as part of this agenda, such as your written staff report under "Information Only Items"****)
Public Communications Received (*Ditto here***)
Follow up items (*Ditto here***)
Next scheduled meeting, cancelled meetings (if any), Study Sessions/Joint Meetings
Announcements, other comments

INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS (This is for information items that normally would not require oral presentation by staff. If you have items under this category, no numbering is required).

Staff Liaison Written Report dated XX

Other informational written communication from staff for Board/Commission dated XX
(i.e. memos)

ADJOURNMENT

Notice to the Public:

This statement would apply to all Boards and Commissions:

*Agenda information is available by calling (contact name and/or phone number here).
Agendas and associated reports are also available on the City's web site at
<http://www.ci.sunnyvale.ca.us>, or at the Sunnyvale Public Library, 665 W. Olive Ave.,
Sunnyvale, 72 hours before the meeting. Please contact the (Department's name
here) office at (phone number here) for specific questions regarding the agenda.*

*This would apply to Planning Commission only:
Your agenda should have appropriate language regarding the process if the public
where to challenge the decision of the Commission. If you don't, you might want to take
a look at Council's agenda and use it as a guide.*

*This would apply to all Boards and Commissions:
Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance in this
meeting, please contact the (contact name/phone number of department staff here).
Notification of 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable
arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (29 CRF 35.104 ADA Title II)*

(See additional information on next page...)

Note: The following is not required by law, but is helpful public information. Please put a page break for this section, so it's all on one page.

GUIDELINES FOR ADDRESSING THE BOARD OR COMMISSION

Public Announcements – Beginning of Meeting

- 3 minutes or less per speaker.
- Speakers are requested to give their name (address is optional).
- Recognition of a special achievement.
- Announcement of public event with definite time and date.
- Public events that are of Board/Commission interest that occur in the City annually. (Only announce one time for the year).

Public Hearings – Order of Hearing as Follows:

- Opening remarks by the applicant (if applicable).
- Speakers are requested to give their name (address is optional).
- Anyone interested in addressing the Council (may only speak one time).
- Closing remarks by the applicant (if applicable).
- Time limit of 3 minutes per person (to be extended at discretion of Chair). Please make comments brief and be prepared to provide new input.

Citizens to be Heard

- Any item relevant to the Board and/or Commission
- Speakers are requested to give their name (address is optional).
- Speakers are to turn in a Speaker Card to the Recording Secretary.
- Items not on the agenda.
- Items that do not fall within the scope of the Public Announcement section.
- Time limit of 3 minutes, 15 minutes total for this category (to be extended or continued to end of Board/Commission business, at the discretion of the Chair). Limit to one appearance during this section.

If you wish to provide the Board/Commission with copies of any handout materials you are presenting, please provide sufficient copies for each Board/Commission member, the Recording Secretary and other staff present.



MINUTES

SUNNYVALE (NAME OF BOARD OR COMMISSION HERE)

The Board or Commission name here met in regular session in venue of meeting here,
address of venue here, at time of meeting here with name of Chair here presiding.

ROLL CALL

Board/Commission Members Present (full names please)

Board/Commission Member Absent (full names please and indicate if excused or
unexcused)

Staff (full names and titles please)

Others (full names and titles of guest speakers, visitors, property owners, etc)

SCHEDULED PRESENTATION

Brief summary of presentation (who, what, when, why). If there are no items falling
under this category, simply indicate "None" next to the heading. This rule applies to
other headings/categories that do not have any items listed.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

List name(s) of person making announcement and a brief
summary of the announcement.

CONSENT CALENDAR

**LIST MOTION/VOTES HERE IN BOLD (one motion for all consent items unless an item
is pulled, in which case, that item will be heard and voted on separately.)**

1.A. Approval of Draft Minutes

1.B. Approval of Agenda

1.C. Approval of Work Plans, Annual Calendars, etc.

1.D. Others, if any

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

List speakers (no need to include address even if provided) and brief summary of their comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS (See helpful tips on last page)

2. Controversial/noticed items
3. New Business items
4. Old Business items

LIST MOTION/VOTES HERE IN BOLD FOR EACH ITEM LISTED. IF THE MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY, PLEASE STATE SO. IF NOT, PLEASE INDICATE ANY DISSENTION OR ABSTENTION. IF MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH A MEMBER ABSENT, PLEASE INDICATE SO. FOR FAILED MOTIONS, PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER IT WAS DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND, OR THE MOTION DIDN'T GET THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF VOTES TO PASS.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

- BOARDMEMBERS OR COMMISSIONERS ORAL COMMENTS
(Note: Identify the member's name and corresponding comments)
- STAFF ORAL COMMENTS
(Note: Identify the Director's or other staff's name(s) that commented)

INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS (These items are listed in the minutes, but there is no need to state anything about them, unless a significant comment like a direction or suggestion was made by a member.)

Staff Liaison Written Report
Other items listed on agenda

ADJOURNMENT Indicate time meeting adjourned (no need to make a motion, your preference)

Respectfully submitted,

Printed name and signature of department head
Or recording secretary

HELPFUL TIPS:

- For meeting breaks or recesses: Please indicate time the recess or break took place and time the meeting reconvened.
 - For late arrival or early departure of a member(s): Please indicate who and approximate time. This is not necessary for staff members.
 - For public hearings: Please articulate that the hearing opened and closed when applicable. Indicate time if available, but not necessary.
 - For members' recusal due to conflict of interest: Please indicate who and why
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